

Federal Agency Wades Into Mermaid Debate

BY WILL OREMUS

JULY 02, 2012 • 10:31 AM



A swimmer dressed in a mermaid costume performs at Chiang Mai zoo aquarium in Thailand.

Photo by Pornchai Kittiwongsakul/AFP/Getty Images

In an attempt to bring clarity to one of the great scientific debates of our time—of any time—the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has taken a strong stand on the existence of mermaids.

“No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found,” the federal agency declares in a statement on its website.

NOAA, better known for issuing reports on such topics as fishery stocks and climate trends, was apparently moved to wade into the mermaid debate by an Animal Planet special that made the case for the mythical creatures’ existence. The special, called “Mermaids: The Body Found,” threw together “evidence” such as cave drawings, injuries to beached whales, and mysterious deep-ocean bloops to paint what it calls “a wildly convincing picture of mermaids, what they may look like, and why they’ve stayed hidden... until now.”

Discovery News notes that the show was intended as science fiction, but that didn’t stop viewers from pelting NOAA with demands for more transparency on the mermaid question.

History suggests NOAA’s statement won’t put the issue to rest, either. After all, the agency has issued one report after another showing that the world’s climate is warming dramatically, and there are still a few conspiracy theorists out there who maintain that the science doesn’t hold water.